

## REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendment and the following remarks.

The Applicants appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 3, 6, 21 and 22, and the allowance of claims 7-12, 15, 16, 19, 20, 23 and 24.

Entry of this Amendment is proper under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 since this Amendment: (a) places the application in condition for allowance for reasons discussed herein; (b) does not raise any new issue regarding further search and/or consideration since the Amendment amplifies issues previously discussed throughout prosecution; (c) does not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally-rejected claims; and (d) places the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The Amendment is necessary because it is made in reply to arguments raised in the rejection. Entry of the Amendment is thus respectfully requested.

By the foregoing amendment, claims 2, 3, 5, 6, 17, 18, 21 and 22 have been amended. Claims 1 and 4 have been canceled. No new matter has been added. Accordingly, claims 2, 3, 5-16 and 17-24 are currently pending in the application and subject to examination.

In the Office Action mailed June 22, 2006, claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 17 and 18 were rejected of under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Bailey et al. (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0085106, hereinafter "Bailey") in view of Kijima et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,661,451, hereinafter "Kijima") and further in view of Miyamoto (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0090575). Also, claims 13 and 14 were rejected under 35 USC §

103(a) as being unpatentable over Bailey in view of Kijima in view of Miyamoto and further in view of Hashimoto (U.S. Patent No. 6,956,605). It is noted that claims 1 and 4 have been canceled, and claims 2, 3, 5, 6, 17, 18, 21 and 22 have been amended. To the extent that the rejections remain applicable to the claims currently pending, the Applicant hereby traverses the rejections, as follows.

Claims 3, 6, 21 and 22 have been amended to be in independent form and to include the subject matter of their base claims and any intervening claims. Thus, claims 3, 6, 21 and 22 are in condition for allowance. Claim 2 has been amended to depend from allowable claim 3, and claims 5 and 18 have been amended to depend from allowable claim 6. As such, claims 3, 5, and 18 are allowable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claims 2 and 6.

In addition, claim 17 has been amended to depend from allowable claim 2. As such, claim 17 is allowable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 2.

Claims 7-12, 15, 16, 19, 20, 23 and 24 are allowed.


### **Conclusion**

For all of the above reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the claims now pending patentability distinguish the present invention from the cited references. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections and an issuance of a Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner determine that any further action is necessary to place this application into better form, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned representative at the number listed below.

In the event this paper is not considered to be timely filed, the Applicants hereby petition for an appropriate extension of time. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fee deficiency or credit any overpayment associated with this communication to Deposit Account No. 01-2300, referring to client-matter number 107317-00028.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michele L. Connell", written over a horizontal line.

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